

10/649,536

REMARKS

Claims 1-35 are pending in this application. Claims 18-35 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1-5, 10 and 12-15 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wolfla in view of Middelman. Claims 6-9 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wolfla in view of Middelman and further in view of JP2001144339A. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wolfla in view of Middelman and further in view of Cantello. Claims 16 and 17 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

As a first procedural matter, the applicants note that prior art reference US Patent Publication 20010037823A1 to Middelman is cited by the Examiner in the claim rejections, but it is not a reference cited by the applicants and it is not shown on the Form PTO-892 Notice of References Cited. In order to ensure that the cover sheet of any patent issuing from this application properly includes all of the considered prior art, the Examiner is requested to include this reference on a Form PTO-892 in the next Office Communication.

The applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter. The applicants respectfully traverse the rejections of claims 1-15 as follows.

The Examiner characterizes USPN 5,951,892 to Wolfla as disclosing the laser cutting of a gap into a ceramic that has been deposited onto a surface. However, the material discussed in Wolfla is a metallic seal material, not a ceramic insulating material as is the subject of the method of the present invention. Wolfla describes the abradable seal material at column 2, line 63 as being an aluminum-based, titanium-based, iron-based, nickel-base or cobalt-based alloy, etc. The word "ceramic" does not appear in the Wolfla patent, and Wolfla does not teach or suggest an improvement to a ceramic insulating material, but rather he is concerned with improving the abradability of a hard metallic alloy material. While the alloys of Wolfla inherently exhibit high toughness/strain tolerance, the present invention is directed to improving

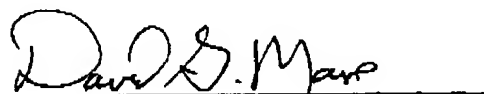
10/649,536

the strain tolerance of a brittle ceramic material. Accordingly, the Wolfla reference fails to provide *prima facie* support for the rejections of the claims under 35 USC 103(a) because Wolfla fails to teach or suggest the claimed limitations of "depositing a layer of ceramic insulating material on the substrate surface; and forming a continuous gap in a top surface of the layer of ceramic insulating material to define segments therein."

The specification is amended herein to add the issued patent number of the priority application, and withdrawn claims 18-35 are cancelled, thereby placing the application in condition for allowance.

Reconsideration of the amended application in light of the above Remarks and allowance of claims 1-17 are respectfully requested. The Examiner is welcomed to call the undersigned attorney should he believe that a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any further objections to the application.

Respectfully submitted,



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